

## Message Text

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ACTION EUR-08

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SS-14 SNM-02 SP-02 L-01 SY-02 INR-05

( ISO ) W

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R 270600Z FEB 75

FM AMEMBASSY SOFIA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9258

INFO AMEMBASSY BELGRADE

AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST

AMEMBASSY PRAGUE

AMEMBASSY WARSAW

C O N F I D E N T I A L SOFIA 0352

STADIS////////////////////////////////////

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: SNAR, BU

SUBJECT: CUSTOMS-TO-CUSTOMS RELATIONS WITH EASTERN EUROPE

REF: (Q) STATE 035502 (B) SOFIA 181

1. BULGARIA HAS PRACTICALLY NO DOMESTIC DRUG PROBLEM AND THEREFORE NEITHER NEEDS NOR WISHES A CONTROL ORGANIZATION ANALOGOUS TO DEA. THE BULGARIAN SECURITY SERVICE WITH WHICH DEA MIGHT HAVE CERTAIN LEGITIMATE INVESTIGATIVE FUNCTIONS IN COMMON ARE AMONG THE MOST POLITICALLY SENSITIVE AND XENOPHIBIC ELEMENTS OF THE POWER STRUCTURE. THESE CONSIDERATIONS MAKE THE POINT OF DEA CONTACT AN EXTREMELY DELICATE AND SENSITIVE MATTER.

2. THE TRICK IS TO CONTINUE THE COOPERATION THAT US CUSTOMS HAS BUILT AND TO EXPAND IT THROUGH THE JUDICIOUS INSERTION OF DEA INTO THE PICTURE AS CONDITIONS PERMIT AND OPPORTUNITIES MAY ARISE. THE WORDING OF REGTEL (A) SUGGESTS THAT DEA CURRENTLY HAS PRIMARY RPT PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITY FOR LIASON WITH BULGARIA. WE DO NOT BELIEVE THERE IS  
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ANY GREAT ADVANTAGE TO BE OBTAINED BY TRANSFERRING THAT

RESPONSIBILITY TO US CUSTOMS. ON THE OTHER HAND, THERE WOULD BE A GREAT DISADVANTAGE IF DEA WERE GIVEN EXCLUSIVE RPT EXCLUSIVE AUTHORITY TO THE POINT OF CURTAILING THE PRESENT US CUSTOMS PROGRAM.

3. ACCORDINGLY EMBASSY DOES NOT BELIEVE THAT AN "EITHER/ OR" DECISION ON EXCLUSIVE JURISDICTION FOR DEA OR CUSTOMS IS WARRANTED OR IN THE BEST INTERESTS OF THE NARCOTICS CONTROL PROGRAM IN BULGARIA AT THIS TIME. WE WOULD RECOMMEND THAT US CUSTOMS CONTINUE ITS CURRENT ACTIVITIES HERE AND THAT DEA BE PHASED IN AS THE SITUATION PERMITS. IF WE ARE FORCE TO COME DOWN ON ONE SIDE, WE WOULD HAVE TO OPT FOR CUSTOMS, SIMPLY BECAUSE IT WOULD BE IRRESPONSIBLE TO RISK JEOPARDIZING PRESENT SATISFACTORY WORKING RELATIONSHIP FOR THE SAKE OF ORGANIZATIONAL TIDINESS.

4. BULGARIAN CUSTOMS AT PRESENT IS THE SOLE AGENCY OF THE GOB COMBATING NARCOTICS TRAFFIC. ITS EFFORTS ARE EXCLUSIVELY THROUGH CUSTOMS INSPECTIONS. THERE IS NO CUSTOMS INVESTIGATIVE DIVISION AS SUCH; REGULAR CUSTOMS OFFICERS ARE USED AS INVESTIGATORS ON AN AD HOC BASIS ONLY. FOR THESE REASONS BULGARIAN CUSTOMS FEELS MORE COMFORTABLE WITH ITS US COUNTERPART, AND EXHIBITS A CERTAIN WARINESS TOWARDS DEA WHOSE FIELD IS MORE SPECIALIZED BUT WHOSE SCOPE OF ACTIVITIES IS BROADER. IN TIME, HOWEVER, WE THINK THAT WARINESS CAN BE OVERCOME IF WE GO ABOUT IT DIPLOMATICALLY AND DO NOT CONFRONT THE BULGARIANS WITH A FAIT ACCOMPLI. HERZ

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